



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Public Hearing Testimony
Public Health Committee
February 16, 2016



H.B. NO. 5053 AN ACT INCREASING ACCESS TO OVERDOSE REVERSAL DRUGS

The Department of Children and Families **supports** H.B. No. 5053, An Act Increasing Access to Overdose Reversal Drugs.

This bill, introduced by Governor Malloy, will make naloxone and other opioid antagonists more readily available to first responders and will prohibit insurers from requiring prior authorization of the opioid antagonist.

My staff has seen a dramatic increase in heroin use in the families we serve. We know, based on the 60+ lives saved by State Police personnel over the past year and a half, that increasing access statewide will save more lives.

As a Co-Chair of the Alcohol and Drug Policy Council (ADPC), I strongly support efforts to have naloxone available to those in a position to save lives. Last year, the Governor proposed and the General Assembly approved, a provision to reconstitute the ADPC as a statewide coordinating body to fight the spread of substance abuse and overdose. Under the direction of Governor Malloy, the ADPC has been charged to study and make recommendations in the following areas:

- Best practices in the treatments of alcohol and substance use disorders, including Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and other evidence-based treatment programs;
- A coordinated, audience specific, prevention message including modern messaging to be used by school districts, parents, medical professionals, municipal leaders, state agencies, and law enforcement;
- A collaborative effort, with medical professionals including doctors, nurse practitioners, dentists and physician assistants to educate all prescribers on the dangers of overprescribing narcotics and the current best practices in identifying substance use disorder and the resource available for treatment; and
- A strategy to make the overdose reversing drug naloxone widely available and affordable to first responders, in pharmacies, and to any individual who may be able to use it to reverse an overdose.

The Governor and the Legislature have already put into place good Samaritan laws for those administering naloxone, expanded prescriber education in pain management, expanded the scope of practice for pharmacists to allow them to prescribe naloxone, and enhanced the state's Prescription Monitoring Program. The provisions in this H.B. 5053 build on these initiatives. I respectfully request that you take favorable action on this bill to continue to build on our momentum to address this very serious issue.